

## **Gateway Project Presentation**

### **House Transportation Committee**

**March 12, 2009**

#### **I. What is the Gateway Project?**

The goal of the project, which runs along the I-75/I-96 corridor from Rosa Parks Boulevard to Clark Street in southwest Detroit, is to ease traffic congestion at the Detroit - Windsor border crossing, and provide a direct connection from I-75, I-96 and other area freeways to the Ambassador Bridge. Most importantly, the project will improve the quality of life in the Mexicantown community by removing truck traffic from local streets, making them safer for residents and visitors alike.

**See enclosed "Connecting Neighbors: Ambassador Bridge Gateway Project"**

#### **II. Project Maps**

3/15/2007 Original Design (see enclosed map marked A)

12/01/2008 Design Change (see enclosed map marked B)

#### **III. Design Changes**

Driving lane on Fort Street

I-75 Service Drive

Use of 23<sup>rd</sup> Street

W Grand Boulevard

Easement to Walter Lubienski private parcel

**See attached December 23, 2008 MDOT Letter, page 4**

#### **IV. Purpose & Need Requirement: Federal Funding**

The "Purpose and Need" of the Gateway Project requires removing traffic from local roads and neighborhoods.

**MDOT**  
Michigan Department of Transportation

**City of Detroit**  
Department of Transportation

**Project:** Ambassador Bridge Connection to M.D.T. Gateway

**Location:** Detroit, Michigan

**Scale:** 1" = 100'

**North Arrow:** [Symbol]

**LEGEND**

- PROPOSED ROADWAY AT GRADE
- PROPOSED EMBANKMENT
- PROPOSED BRIDGE
- PROPOSED MOOT GATEWAY
- PROPERTY OWNED BY OTHERS

**PROPOSED AND CONFIDENTIAL**

**DETROIT INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE COMPANY**

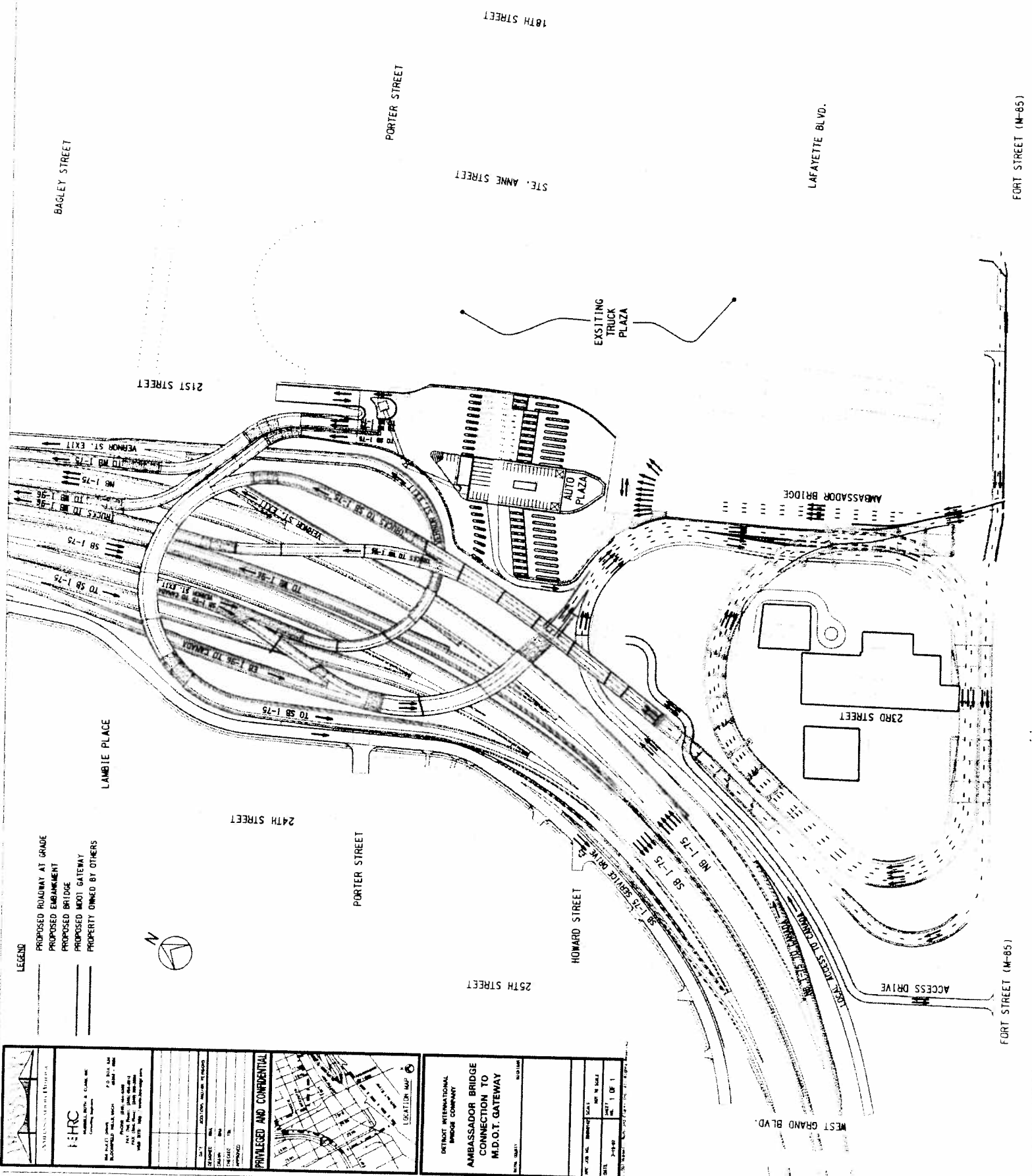
**AMBASSADOR BRIDGE CONNECTION TO M.D.T. GATEWAY**

**DATE:** 10/1/84

**BY:** [Signature]

**DATE:** 10/1/84

**BY:** [Signature]



FORT STREET (M-85)

FORT STREET (M-85)





## CONNECTING NEIGHBORS

ambassador bridge  
gateway project

This is the first issue of “Connecting Neighbors,” a bi-monthly newsletter from the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) designed to give you information and updates about the **Ambassador Bridge Gateway Project (ABGP)**. What exactly is it? When will it start? Why is it so important? Read on! You’ll find an interview with MDOT Director Kirk Steudle, a history of the project and more. Want additional information? Go to the ABGP website at [www.michigan.gov/gateway](http://www.michigan.gov/gateway). But first, start with this newsletter, read on, and learn how ABGP will connect neighbors and drive Michigan’s economy into the future.

### AN INTERVIEW with State Transportation Director Kirk T. Steudle, P.E.



**Q: MDOT has taken on many projects in metropolitan Detroit and throughout the state. What is the significance of the Ambassador Bridge Gateway Project?**

**A:** The project includes two interstate freeways and improves access to the #1 U.S.–Canada commercial crossing that carries 23 percent of all surface trade between the two countries. The Ambassador Bridge Gateway Project will relieve congestion/trucks on adjacent surface streets in Detroit’s Mexicantown community and provide access to the Detroit Mexicantown International Welcome Center and Mercado. The largest phase of construction, Phase 4, will get underway this summer to complete freeway reconstruction and access improvements to the community and the Ambassador Bridge. It is the largest single construction contract that MDOT has ever undertaken in any part of the state. It is the culmination of nearly 14 years of planning and design, representing an investment for this phase alone of about \$170 million. Total cost of all phases of the project when complete will be more than \$230 million.

**Q: What improvements will be made as a part of this phase of the project?**

**A:** During Phase 4, sections of I-75 and I-96 will be reconstructed and a new interchange will be built. This project will enhance safety and decrease traffic congestion in the Mexicantown community while improving access to and from the Ambassador Bridge plaza. One of the most exciting elements of the project is the new state-of-the-art pedestrian bridge that will be built over I-75 and I-96 to connect the east and west sides of Mexicantown. It will have some unique design elements and be the first bridge of its kind to be built in Michigan.

**Q: Is there a connection between this project and efforts to build a new bridge?**

**A:** This project will provide direct access from the Ambassador Bridge to adjacent freeways with new highway and ramp reconstruction, and provide access to the new Detroit Mexicantown International Welcome Center and Mercado. As is typical with highway studies and design, the facilities will be built to accommodate expected future growth. The Detroit International Bridge Company is responsible for the design and reconstruction of the plaza as part of the project, but a new bridge is not part of the Ambassador Bridge Gateway Project.

**Q: What is the difference between the Ambassador Bridge Gateway Project and the Detroit River International Crossing Study (DRIC)?**

**A:** The ABGP has been underway for several years and its purpose is to improve the flow of traffic at the busiest border crossing in North America. The purpose of the current phase of the DRIC is to reach a decision regarding the type and location of a possible new Detroit River crossing. Both are focused on serving future needs between the United States and Canada in the Detroit - Windsor trade corridor.

*(continued on next page)*

# ABGP

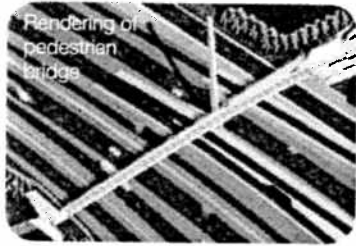
## Phase 4 at a Glance

- Reconstruction of 1.5 miles of I-75
- Reconstruction of 1 mile of I-96
- Reconstruction of 18 ramps
- Reconstruction & rehabilitation of 24 bridges
- Construction of 3 miles of retaining walls
- Construction of cable-stay pedestrian bridge
- Relocation of large water and sewer lines
- Relocation of major public lighting transmission lines



Access to these west Mexicantown businesses will remain as clear and easy as possible. Signage will help guide both tourists and local residents to all Mexicantown businesses.

### Q: Who are MDOT's partners on this project?



A: A project of this size and scope requires cooperation and teamwork among both public and private partners. MDOT has the support of the Federal Highway Administration, with much of the funding for the project coming from federal highway legislation. Without the contributions of the Detroit International Bridge Company, there would be no Ambassador Bridge Gateway Project. The city of Detroit is key to the success of the project and we are pleased to be working with representatives from Mayor Kilpatrick's office, the Detroit City Council and many city departments. SEMCOG (Southeast Michigan Council of Governments) is a partner and we have also worked with U.S Customs and the U.S. General Services Administration. We cannot say enough about our partnership with the Mexicantown community which has long had a vision for improving their neighborhood. We are pleased to help make that vision a reality.

### Q: It sounds like lots of time and resources are going into the Ambassador Bridge Gateway Project. What are the benefits to the community and the state?

A: We expect this project to benefit our state, our region and the communities surrounding the project in many ways. Here are a few:

**Economic development** is critical to building Michigan's economy. From an historical perspective, we know that jobs and economic development flourish in areas where there is strong transportation infrastructure. We expect many industries to benefit directly and immediately once the Ambassador Bridge Gateway Project is completed, including the automotive and other manufacturing businesses that depend on "just-in-time" delivery and medical facilities that employ nurses and other personnel from both sides of the border. We also expect the project to generate jobs as construction gets underway. **Safety and quality of life** in communities located near the bridge will be dramatically improved as this project removes truck traffic exiting the bridge off of city streets and directly onto the freeway. Finally, **tourism**, Michigan's second largest industry, will be enhanced. National newspapers such as *USA Today* have already published articles touting the city, with its new Detroit Mexicantown International Welcome Center and Mercado, stadiums, casinos, theaters, museums and restaurants, as an exciting travel destination. Providing easier access to the Ambassador Bridge will result in freeways and city streets that encourage safe and efficient travel to destinations on both sides of the border.

### Q: This is a very involved and complex project. How does MDOT plan to keep the community informed about what's going on?

A: MDOT is strongly committed to both keeping the community apprised of what's going on with the Ambassador Bridge Gateway Project and working cooperatively with all stakeholders to make sure that everything goes as smoothly as possible. Our team of communications professionals, engineers and others is charged with managing an on-going effort to reach out to everyone who might be affected by the project. We have been working with community representatives since 1995 and have attended meetings with a wide variety of businesses, government officials and organizations to share information about the project. We will soon distribute a project map with detours to help drivers get around construction once it begins and we plan to publish this *Connecting Neighbors* newsletter on a bi-monthly basis. You can expect to hear a good deal about this project in the media as we continue to move ahead.

We have created a project website ([www.michigan.gov/gateway](http://www.michigan.gov/gateway)) to keep the public informed. The website will be your best resource for the latest information on public meetings and project updates.



**CONNECTING  
NEIGHBORS**

ambassador bridge  
gateway project

## A THUMBNAIL HISTORY OF THE PROJECT



**1974:** Detroit Common Council passes a resolution to locate a tourist information center near the Ambassador Bridge.

**1992:** The Mexicantown Conceptual Development Plan to create a privatized joint-use facility to house a welcome center, office and retail space is submitted to MDOT.

**1994:** The Review of Eastern Border Transportation Coalition Trade Flows, Needs and Issues notes that Ambassador Bridge has highest volume of any single U.S. border crossing with 8.2 million vehicles annually.

Representatives from MDOT, the city of Detroit, and the Detroit International Bridge Company (DIBC) meet to discuss Ambassador Bridge crossing long range transportation needs and agree that existing infrastructure on U.S. side needs improvements to provide efficient access between bridge and freeway system.

**1995:** MDOT initiates study for access improvements to Ambassador Bridge and surrounding freeways. MDOT and the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) complete this early preliminary engineering study.

MDOT convenes Project Steering Committee to seek input from key project partners and the public. A strategic communications plan is developed to keep the public apprised of study progress.

**1996:** MDOT and DIBC sign a Memorandum of Understanding to implement the Ambassador Bridge Gateway Project.

MDOT, DIBC, the city of Detroit and the Mexicantown Community Development Corporation (MCDC) sign a

Memorandum of Understanding to build a welcome center at the base of the Ambassador Bridge in Mexicantown.

**1997:** Federal Highway Administration approves interchange modifications requested by MDOT and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), allowing MDOT to proceed with further project development.

**1998:** Project becomes eligible for funds from Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA). Federal dollars are essential and will pay for access road and ramp reconstruction plus signs, traffic signals and lighting.

**1999 – 2001:** Working with the city of Detroit and other project partners, MDOT moves ahead with early engineering and design phases of the project.

**2001:** To minimize project impact on motorists and facilitate construction, MDOT splits the Ambassador Bridge Gateway Project into separate construction phases.

**2002:** MDOT and MCDC sign a Memorandum of Understanding to build an international welcome center and mercado.

**2003:** Phase 1 of the project is completed with the rehabilitation of West Fort Street from Rosa Parks Boulevard to Clark Street.

**2004:** MDOT signs agreements with DIBC and with the city of Detroit to move ahead with Phase 4 of the project.

Phase 2 is completed with the reconstruction of the West Grand Boulevard Bridge over I-75.

**2005:** Phase 3 to reconstruct the I-75/I-96 southbound service drive and the I-96 off-ramp begins. The anticipated project completion date is fall 2007.

**2007:** The Detroit Mexicantown International Welcome Center and Mercado to open.

Phase 4 is advertised and let for construction. The project gets underway in July with pre-construction on underground power lines and service drives in and around the project area.

**2008:** Phase 4 continues with reconstruction of sections of I-75 and I-96, a new interchange and a pedestrian bridge over I-75. Freeways open to traffic by late 2009 with expected completion in 2010.

## Signs of Progress

- MDOT will be placing a series of signs featuring information and illustrative renderings of the Ambassador Bridge Gateway Project in various locations in and around Mexicantown. The signs are meant to help residents and visitors visualize the new pedestrian bridge, lighting, landscaping and other anticipated ABGP improvements.
- MDOT has already begun pre-construction on underground power lines and service drives in and around the project area. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause as we move forward. If you have any questions or concerns, please give us a call at 313-965-6350.
- For current scheduling of public information meetings and other project updates please visit our website.

## Send Us Your Questions

Got questions about the Ambassador Bridge Gateway Project? First take a look at the ABGP website at [www.michigan.gov/gateway](http://www.michigan.gov/gateway) - you may find the answers you're looking for there. If not, send your questions to [peekb@michigan.gov](mailto:peekb@michigan.gov). We'll post the answers on the website or in a future edition of the newsletter.

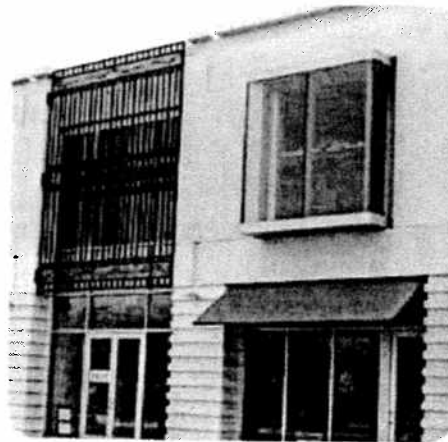
Prepared by: MDOT graphics  
7,000 copies printed at \$.32 each for a total cost of \$2,240.

## Please join us for the ABGP Public Information Meeting

We will provide up-to-date information on the  
Ambassador Bridge Gateway Project

**Thursday, August 23, 2007, 6 -7:30 p.m.**

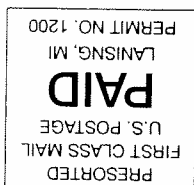
Electrical Workers Local 58 Hall  
1358 Abbott Street, Detroit  
(Please use building entrance on Porter Street)



### The new Detroit Mexicantown International Welcome Center

MDOT will open the new welcome center and Ambassador Bridge Gateway Project office in early fall.

Mexicantown Community Development Corporation's office is located in the welcome center and always a great place to find the latest information on the project.



MDOT Region Office  
18101 West Nine Mile Rd.  
Southfield, MI 48075



CONNECTING  
NEIGHBORS  
ambassador bridge  
gateway project



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
DETROIT

KIRK T. STEUDLE  
DIRECTOR

December 23, 2008

Mr. Dan Stamper  
Detroit International Bridge Company ("DIBC")  
12225 Stephens Road  
Warren, Michigan 48089

**RE: DIBC Change Proposals A-1, A-2 and A-3**  
I-75 Reconstruction @ Ambassador Bridge  
MDOT Contract ID 82123/82124/82194/82195 - 37795A, 51503A, 60103A, 78423A, 78827A,  
86954A, 86955, 87519A

This letter is in response to your electronic mail transmittal dated December 9, 2008 which provided the three attached plan drawings identified as "Interim MDOT Return & Parcel Access" and respectively labeled as February 2009, Spring 2009, and Fall 2009. These shall serve as change requests from DIBC for review by the Michigan Department of Transportation (DEPARTMENT). The DEPARTMENT is awaiting the "Final" configuration of the DIBC plaza plan as requested by the DEPARTMENT on December 9, 2008.

**The DEPARTMENT cannot approve the DIBC plan drawing proposals A-1, A-2, and A-3 and the reasons are as follows:**

**PLAN DRAWING A-1 (February 2009 to March 2009)**

1. Bridge piers are shown on the plan immediately north of Fort Street and west of the existing bridge and were constructed prior to submitting the plan to the DEPARTMENT for review. These piers are in conflict with the proposed truck ramp which is to be constructed as shown in the agreement between DIBC and the DEPARTMENT.
2. The auto fueling stations south of the DIBC Duty Free Store and Warehouse and north of Fort Street are in direct conflict with the truck ramp which is to be constructed as shown in the agreement between DIBC and the DEPARTMENT. DIBC has not presented the DEPARTMENT with any proposed revisions to the truck ramp for review.



3. The DIBC Structures S04 and S05 are not shown in the drawing. These structures are to be constructed as shown in the agreement between DIBC and DEPARTMENT. DIBC has covered the steel piling which was installed for S04 and S05 with concrete pavement. DIBC has not presented any proposed revisions to the DIBC S04 and S05 structures to the DEPARTMENT for review, nor has an explanation of why concrete pavement was placed over the piling been provided.
4. The DIBC proposal is based on the DEPARTMENT opening a portion of northbound I-75 earlier than required by Contract. The freeway is closed for the construction of the DEPARTMENT portions of the Gateway project as agreed upon by DIBC. The DIBC proposal is showing I-75 open to traffic, between Clark Avenue and Lafayette Boulevard, ten (10) months early. Though much of the mainline pavement is ahead of schedule and complete, all work included in the DEPARTMENT project is not complete and the Contractors are using this area to stage materials and equipment. Current progress indicates the DEPARTMENT portion of the project may open in July 2009, which would be six (6) months ahead of schedule. DIBC has not provided adequate justification for the DEPARTMENT to accelerate the opening of northbound I-75 and will not accept responsibility for the additional costs that this acceleration would incur.

DIBC's designer Hubbell, Roth and Clark (HRC) provided the DEPARTMENT with a list of anticipated benefits to be realized should the newly constructed I-75 pavement be opened ten months early. HRC's anticipated benefits are listed below and the DEPARTMENT comments follow:

- a. **"The Opening of the NB I-75 Ramp to the Ambassador Bridge relieves congestion of the Clark ramp from being the end of the freeway and the connection to the international border."**

Observations of the DEPARTMENT Michigan Intelligent Transportation Systems Center (MITSC) have shown there is little congestion, and this has been the case since the start of the Gateway project construction. The main reason for traffic congestion is when there are issues with Customs and Border Patrol at the Bridge. The overall flow of traffic to Canada has been reduced due to the full closure of I-75 and the slow economy. The DEPARTMENT revised the Contract and constructed a two lane ramp at the northbound I-75 Clark Street exit ramp prior to closing of the freeway in Winter 2008. This has resulted in having two lanes of I-75 open at all times, while maintaining two lanes of traffic to Canada along the eastbound service drive. The DEPARTMENT dedicated the left lane for truck traffic to keep trucks separate from automobile traffic. In addition, the DEPARTMENT added signs to have northbound I-75 traffic exit at Springwells and/or Liverniois streets to separate local and Canada traffic. These measures were taken to improve the flow of traffic to Canada at the expense of the DEPARTMENT.

- b. **"The opening of the NB I-75 Ramp and the subsequent closure of the service drive allow the construction of MDOT S32 and DIBC S02 without impeding traffic to the international border crossing."**

The DIBC proposal actually does impede traffic to Canada as it reduces the northbound I-75 traffic from two lanes down to one lane near the Lafayette exit ramp.

The DIBC proposal provides no benefit to the DEPARTMENT for the construction of MDOT S32 as the structure will be completed as originally planned. The DEPARTMENT acquired a lease for private parcels 199 and 201 adjacent to MDOT S32 to allow for the completion of the DEPARTMENT work. The lease is in place until July 21, 2010 and the DEPARTMENT will utilize this property in Winter and Spring of 2009.

- c. **"Local access to the Ambassador Bridge can be provided using signage directing them to the NB I-75 ramp to Clark which will take them directly to the Bridge."**

DEPARTMENT comments are the same as noted above for item a.

- d. **"The staging improvement requested of MDOT only enhances the ability of the traveling public to navigate the detours and provide improved flow of commerce to and from the Ambassador Bridge. In these economic times, the value of time and resources is the difference in sustainability of an industry."**

The current detours have been in place for ten months and the traffic patterns have been established by the motoring public. The DEPARTMENT is on course to open I-75 in July 2009 and any interim changes to the current detours would lead to confusion without any noticeable benefits.

5. The DIBC proposal revised the current configuration of maintaining two lanes of northbound I-75 traffic to Canada to one lane, as noted previously. In addition, DIBC proposes the use of one lane of the eastbound/northbound I-75 service drive to provide egress for DEPARTMENT maintenance vehicles. The DEPARTMENT cannot accept this inefficient use of the public right of way.
6. The DIBC proposal requires the DEPARTMENT's northbound I-75 exit ramp at Lafayette Boulevard and the I-75 eastbound service drive to be open to traffic by February 2009. DIBC and the DEPARTMENT agreed on October 15, 2008 to delay the construction of the eastbound service drive from Fall 2008 to Spring 2009. This was to accommodate the DIBC schedule as the plaza reconstruction was behind schedule. In the coordination meeting dated September 10, 2008, DIBC suggested for the DEPARTMENT to construct the eastbound service drive using part-width construction techniques in lieu of full-width. On September 17, 2008 the DEPARTMENT rejected the proposal as there was no benefit to the DEPARTMENT and it was an unjustified added cost to the DEPARTMENT. This DIBC change proposal of part-width construction is adding over \$400,000.00 in costs to the DEPARTMENT portion of the project. DIBC informed the DEPARTMENT on October 10, 2008 that "DIBC is not accepting delay or additional cost". On December 9, 2008, the DEPARTMENT provided the itemized breakdown of the added costs totaling \$398,000.00 to DIBC in anticipation of a joint discussion. To date, DIBC has not responded. The total added cost as of the date of this letter has now increased from the original estimate of \$398,000.00 due to the lack of a response from DIBC. The DEPARTMENT cannot accept these additional costs to the taxpayers without valid justification.
7. The DIBC proposal requires all private parcel and maintenance vehicle access to exit at West Grand Boulevard. This route was not a part of the DIBC and DEPARTMENT agreement. DIBC must show evidence they have City of Detroit approval for this alternative use of West Grand Boulevard. Also, the access to West Grand Boulevard is in conflict with the current traffic flow from the I-75 eastbound service drive to the temporary toll booths. An alternative route for private parcel access and maintenance vehicles is required and must be agreed upon between DIBC and the DEPARTMENT.

**PLAN DRAWING A-2 (March 2009 to September 2009)**

1. The DIBC proposal is in conflict with the plans and construction schedule provided to the DEPARTMENT for the West Fort Street Permit work (MDOT Permit # 82071-5042-06-5089) to accommodate the DIBC truck ramp. DIBC submitted the construction schedule to the DEPARTMENT for the truck ramp work as part of the permit and it was to be completed between July 1, 2009 and August 29, 2009. There is no indication that this work is being completed during this "Interim" stage.
2. The DIBC proposal does not include the redesign of DIBC Structure S02. DIBC noted in previous coordination meetings over the past several months that DIBC Structure S02 is being redesigned. DIBC has not provided plan drawings for the redesign of DIBC Structure S02, which was to be submitted to the DEPARTMENT on December 15, 2008.
3. The DIBC proposal is unacceptable for reasons 1, 2, 3, and 7 as noted above for A-1.

**PLAN DRAWING A-3 (September 2009 to June 2010)**

1. The DIBC proposal does not include the permanent design of the DIBC plaza. DIBC shall submit the permanent configuration of the plaza as of June 2010.
2. The DIBC proposal violates the Lubienski private parcel recorded easement as agreed upon between DIBC and the DEPARTMENT.
3. The DIBC proposal requires the use of West Grand Boulevard for all truck traffic entering from Canada. DIBC must show evidence of City of Detroit approval for this use of West Grand Boulevard.
4. The DIBC proposal requires expanded use of West Fort Street without DEPARTMENT approval. The DEPARTMENT cannot permit this DIBC proposal on the use of West Fort Street as it is a major change to the purpose and need of the Gateway project.
5. The DIBC proposal has shown the emergency exit gate located in the travel lanes of West Fort Street and the DIBC West Fort Street Permit (MDOT Permit # 82071-5042-06-5089) has shown the emergency exit gate to be off of the travel lanes. DIBC must meet their obligations of the DEPARTMENT approved permit.
6. The DIBC proposal is unacceptable for reasons 1, 2, and 3 as noted above for A-1

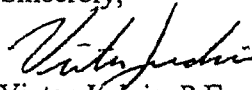
The DEPARTMENT can assist DIBC in planning the construction staging of the plaza while maintaining efficient flow of traffic to and from Canada. The DIBC proposal has provided some benefits to the DIBC portions of the Gateway project while adding work and cost to the DEPARTMENT portions of the project. The DIBC proposals have revised the purpose and need of the Gateway project. These DIBC change proposals cannot be approved as submitted by DIBC. The DEPARTMENT is willing to meet with DIBC and reach an amicable solution.

The DEPARTMENT is seeking assurance that DIBC will honor its contractual obligations. The DEPARTMENT freeway ramp from southbound I-75 and eastbound I-96 to the DIBC plaza cannot be open to traffic until an amicable solution is reached and a maintenance agreement between DIBC and the DEPARTMENT is in place. The current traffic flow to the Ambassador Bridge will remain until an agreement is reached between DIBC and the DEPARTMENT.

Please provide dates when DIBC will be available to meet and discuss these matters. We hope to work with DIBC to ensure the successful completion of both projects and to avoid additional costs to the taxpayers, while maintaining safe and efficient flow for the motoring public.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or comments.

Sincerely,



Victor Judnic, P.E.  
Delivery Engineer

cc: Kirk Steudle, Larry Tibbits, Greg Johnson, Robert Ranck, Andy Zeigler, Phil Lynwood (FHWA), Robert Davis, Rita Screws, Victor Judnic, 37795A Field Files



12TH DISTRICT  
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MICHIGAN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

**RASHIDA H. TLAIB**  
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

February 20, 2009

Kirk Steudle, Director  
Michigan Department of Transportation  
P.O. Box 30050  
Lansing, MI 48909

Dan Stamper, President  
Detroit International Bridge Co.  
P.O. Box 32666  
Detroit, MI 48232

Dear Director Steudle and Mr. Stamper,

The Gateway Project is one of the largest transportation projects undertaken by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). Gateway has cost the federal government \$145 million and the State of Michigan \$30 million and has resulted in the creation of over 2,000 construction jobs.

The "Purpose and Need" of Gateway consisted of removing traffic from local roads and neighborhoods. As the host of the project, Southwest Detroit has also paid a considerable sum in order to reap the rewards of a successfully executed Gateway project. The construction of Gateway required the closure of I-75 between Clark Street and Rosa Parks, completely interrupting direct entrance into the vibrant business communities in Southwest Detroit, especially those located in the heart of Mexicantown. According to the Southwest Detroit Business Association, businesses directly impacted by the construction have lost up to 30% in revenue. Traffic congestion, including commercial trucks, has tripled in local neighborhoods, especially those near Fort Street, Clark Street and Rosa Parks, causing substantial accelerated wear and outright damage to local streets. The freeway closing has also led to an increase in criminal activity, especially prostitution. My community never wrote a check, but it has invested heavily in this project's successful completion.

As a resident of Southwest Detroit and as the representative for the people of my district, I insist that MDOT and Detroit International Bridge Company (DIBC) abide by the original design and agreement for the Gateway Project. It is imperative that the original Purpose and Need requirement for Gateway be adhered to. Due to several conversations with the City of Detroit Law Department and MDOT, I am concerned by the fact that proposals to use part of Fort Street, Service Drive, 23<sup>rd</sup> Street and W Grand Boulevard in

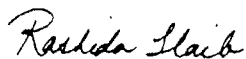
the final design for Gateway are being considered. Consideration of a design allowing traffic to use local roads would constitute a clear and direct conflict with the original purpose for the Gateway. My intense concern from these facts is only heightened by the fact that a redesign incorporating these changes would jeopardize the contractual integrity of the project, creating an opportunity for the federal government to request their \$145 million back for the project. This could cost the State of Michigan millions, hurt future project relationships with the Federal Highway Administration, and cause untold short and long term injury to Michigan's private construction contractors and their employees.

On behalf of the community I represent and the residents and businesses located in my district, I respectfully request that all involved parties agree to make the following commitments:

- Upon the completion of Gateway, there will be no commercial (i.e. bridge) traffic on local roads.
- There will be no acquisition and usage of City or State roads or property, without the proper authority by the designated City of Detroit departments, including, but not limited to 23rd Street, the Lodge Service Drive, W Grand Blvd, Fort Street and Riverside Park.
- There will be an easement as agreed upon between DIBC and MDOT to Mr. Walter Lubinski's private property.
- There will be no deviation from the original agreed upon Gateway design.
- There will be no actions that result in unnecessary and harmful delays.

I appreciate the resources and time that both DIBC and MDOT have put into making sure that Gateway Project is a success. I hope to hear from both parties regarding these concerns in the next two weeks. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Rashida Tlaib  
State Representative  
12th District, Detroit

Cc: Ron DeCook, MDOT  
Kathy Wendler, SDBA  
Fort Street Business Association Board Members  
Hubbard Farms Residence Council  
Corktown Residence Council  
House Transportation Committee

[www.michigan.gov](http://www.michigan.gov)

(To Print: use your browser's print function)

Brenda V. Peek 248-483-5109  
Transportation

Release Date: January 12, 2009

Last Update: January 13, 2009

January 12, 2009 -- Almost a year after the start of construction, the Michigan Department of Transportation's (MDOT) I-75 Gateway Project is more than 70 percent complete and ahead of schedule. The goal of the project, which runs along the I-75/I-96 corridor from Rosa Parks Boulevard to Clark Street in southwest Detroit, is to ease traffic congestion at the Detroit - Windsor border crossing, and provide a direct connection from I-75, I-96 and other area freeways to the Ambassador Bridge. Most importantly, the project will improve the quality of life in the Mexicantown community by removing truck traffic from local streets, making them safer for residents and visitors alike.

One of the many unique aspects of the I-75 Gateway Project is that MDOT and the Detroit International Bridge Company (DIBC) are working together. MDOT is reconstructing 2.5 miles of I-75 and I-96, and 18 bridges and 24 ramps. This includes a signature pedestrian bridge connecting east and west Mexicantown at Bagley Avenue adjacent to the newly opened Detroit Mexicantown International Welcome Center. The DIBC's responsibility is to redesign and rebuild the Ambassador Bridge Plaza to improve safety and ease traffic flow.

"Our current progress schedule will have the entire area fully reopened to traffic even sooner than the original December 2009 projected date," said MDOT Metro Region Engineer Greg Johnson. "We are in constant communication and coordination with the DIBC to ensure that the overall objectives and timeline of this project are fully met."

To date, MDOT has completed work on 1 mile of I-96 and 1 mile of I-75, along with 3 miles of new retaining and sound walls designed to minimize noise and enhance safety in neighborhoods adjacent to the freeway. Of the ramps and bridges impacted by the project, MDOT has removed four structures, replaced two and rehabilitated seven. Work on the remaining bridges and ramps are in progress and at various levels of completion.

In addition to continuing construction on the current phase of the project, MDOT is preparing for the final two phases which involve constructing approaches to the Bagley Avenue pedestrian bridge and landscape work within the entire project corridor. According to Johnson, these will be smaller contracts structured to encourage locally-owned businesses to participate in the bidding process that will take place later this year. For more information on these and other opportunities, call MDOT Metro Region Development Engineer Paige Williams at 248-483-5155.

"We want to thank the southwest Detroit community and our southeast Michigan motorists for their patience and cooperation as we continue to move forward", Johnson concluded. "At the end of the day, this project will help retain jobs, boost the state's \$5 billion tourism industry and ensure that the Detroit-Windsor border remains the route of choice for the \$115 billion in international trade that flows to and from the United States annually."

MDOT says: Remember - In Ice and Snow, Take It Slow!

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No single non-profit, or group of non-profits can ensure that transportation agreements proposed and underway in Southwest Detroit would be properly funded, implemented, monitored and enforced.

The Gateway Project has had a significant effect on the businesses in Southwest Detroit. Businesses, and consequently jobs, have been, and will continue to be impacted by the massive transportation projects planned and underway in Southwest Detroit.

Traffic patterns are altered, most often, and to their detriment lowering business property values despite the ultimate and anticipated value of the outcome of the project. To date businesses in Southwest Detroit have reported the following losses: The best and most organized have lost up to 15% of their business, others 35-40%.

Customers to Southwest Detroit can not find their favorite stores and restaurants due to poor directional signage, a map that did not include Southwest Detroit, and the severe deterioration of alternative surface routes due to the high traffic of massive commercial trucks.

The outcome of the project promised to ultimately remove this traffic from the surface streets. Now the Detroit International Bridge Company is asking for a redesign to continue to use these streets after the project is completed, to the detriment of the community.

The Community Park, Riverside Park, has been cut off from the community. Residents are not able to use the only viable park on the water as a result of this project.

Millions of dollars have been spent on the project, but very few dollars have been made available to the severely impacted community to mitigate the effects, or to prepare for this significant disruption.

In the upcoming years and months, several significant transportation projects will be underway in Southwest Detroit. Southwest Detroit's location disproportionately bears the chosen location of projects that benefit national and international interests. Southwest Detroit should benefit disproportionately from the state/federal investment.